

TOP SECRET RUFF

7 October 1965

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MERCHANT SHIP CONVOY (WESTBOUND)
EAST SIBERIAN SEA

1. THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE (NSR), ESTABLISHED IN 1932, EXTENDS APPROXIMATELY 3,375 NM FROM MURMANSK TO PROVIDENIYA. THE NSR IS IMPORTANT TO THE USSR BECAUSE IT SERVES AS THE PRIMARY SUPPLY LINE FOR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE SOVIET ARCTIC. THE NSR IS ALSO USED FOR THE ANNUAL TRANSFER OF NAVAL UNITS FROM THE NORTHERN FLEET TO THE PACIFIC FLEET AND FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF NAVAL FORCES BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS.

SHIPPING PROCEDURE ON THE NSR IS CONTROLLED BY THE SHORT NAVIGATION SEASON. TO REDUCE TRAVEL TIME AND ICE DANGER, MOST SHIPS START FROM EITHER THE EASTERN OR THE WESTERN END AND MOVE TOWARDS THE CENTER, UNLOADING CARGO ALONG THE WAY. CARGO FOR THE REMAINING HALF OF THE ROUTE IS UNLOADED AT TIKSI TO BE PICKED UP BY SHIPS RETURNING TO THEIR HOME PORTS OF MURMANSK, ARKHANGELSK, OR VLADIVOSTOK.

3. THIS MISSION REVEALS THAT [REDACTED], AT 0028Z, A CONVOY OF 10 MERCHANT VESSELS IN A COLUMN APPROXIMATELY 8 MILES LONG IS PROCEED-

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ING ON COURSE [REDACTED] THROUGH PAN ICE AND SMALL AREAS
OF CLEAR WATER IN THE EAST SIBERIAN SEA AT APPROXIMATELY 71-57N 152-50E.
THE CONVOY CONSISTS OF 1 TANKER/AO (OILER), 1 ICE BREAKER/MERCHANT VESSEL,
1 POSSIBLE ICEBREAKER, AND 7 MERCHANT VESSELS.

25X1

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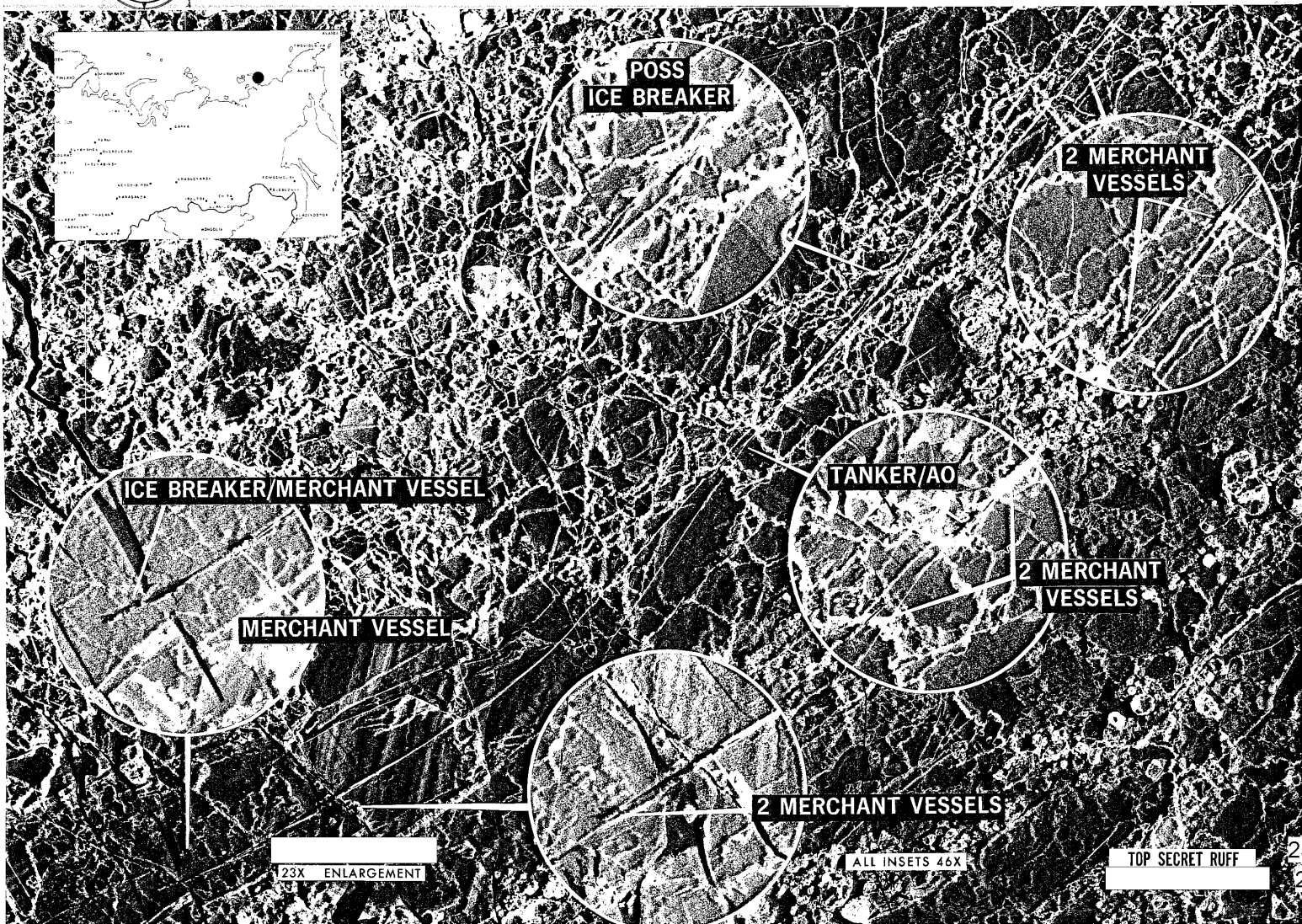
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71-57N 152-50E

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